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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 003600

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/25/2018

TAGS: PGOV PREL SNAR CO EC

SUBJECT: COLOMBIAN-ECUADORIAN ANTINARCOTICS COOPERATION
CONTINUES WITH AN INTERDICTION OPERATION

Classified By: NAS Director, Perry Holloway, E.O. 12958, reasons 1.4(b)
and (d)

1.(C) SUMMARY: Despite recent diplomatic tension between Colombia and Ecuador, antinarcotics working-level cooperation between these two countries continued with a September 19 narcotics interdiction operation in Narino, Colombia. On September 18 Ecuadorians provided critical intelligence and assistance and, as a result, Colombian Police Junglas were able to capture a 45-foot semi-submersible and destroy a semi-submersible manufacturing facility. The operation prevented thousands of kilograms of drugs from reaching the United States while demonstrating the will of both countries to work together against drug trafficking) at least at working levels. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Despite diplomatic tensions between Colombia and Ecuador following the March 1 Colombian bombing of Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC in Spanish) second-in command Raul Reyes,s camp in Ecuador, working-level cooperation in antinarcotics continued as demonstrated by a Colombian-Ecuadorian interdiction mission on September 19 in the Colombian Department of Narino. Fifty USG-supported Junglas (Colombian Antinarcotics Police Airmobile Commandos) flew U.S.-supported aircraft (two UH 60 and one UH-II) and worked with an Ecuadorian police officer to successfully capture a 45-foot semi-submersible craft and a craft-building facility located in highly challenging terrain on the Mataje river, near the Pacific coast, 300 meters from Ecuador,s border. The Ecuadorian officer provided coordinates for the semi-submersible craft and the factory, and actively participated in the mission by marking target location for the Junglas. The Junglas did not enter Ecuador.

¶3. (U) The semi-submersible craft-building facility) valued by the Colombian Government at \$1.5 million - appeared to have been in use for over two years. The site contained 400 gallons of resin, 30 fiber glass laminates, as well as accommodations for 20 workers who appeared to have been working in continuous shifts since there were only 10 beds in sight. The nearly-completed 45-foot submarine, capable of carrying up to 8 tons of narcotics, was likely poised to proceed two-and-a-half miles down the Mataje river to pick up 4.7 tons of cocaine (street value \$141 million) that were seized by the Ecuadorian police on September 15.

¶4. (C) Colombian political will and Ecuadorian working-level cooperation made this operation possible. Ecuadorian officials contacted Colombian authorities with target information soon after their September 15 raid and offered to liaise with the Junglas. Colombian National Police Director, General Oscar Naranjo, recognized the

overture and prioritized this mission above other competing objectives. With this operation, Colombia and Ecuador showed that in spite of political differences, they can still work together on counternarcotics issues.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: Ecuador has historically been one of Colombia's most efficient regional partners in the war on drugs. Illicit narcotics production and trafficking directly support numerous narcoterrorist organizations in the Andean region and damage the health and well-being of U.S. citizens.

The recognition of shared strategic objectives and the continuation of joint antinarcotics efforts between Colombia and Ecuador prevent these organizations from taking advantage of diplomatic tensions and establishing a safe haven along the porous 400-mile border. END COMMENT.

NICHOLS